

HANDBOOK
for
LIBRARY ADVISORY
COMMITTEES

(Revised June 2005)

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LIBRARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE HANDBOOK

Revised June 2005

INTRODUCTION

This Library Advisory Committee Handbook represents a revision of the 1999 LAC Handbook and reflects the Official Bylaws of the Montgomery County Library Board.

HISTORY

In 1951, the Montgomery County Government adopted a law creating a Department of Public Libraries and a Library Board, responsible to the County Executive. The Library Board was authorized to designate from among the residents of each area in which a branch library was located a local Library Advisory Committee (LAC) of not less than three (3) members. Accordingly, the Library Board could establish or could abolish a Library Advisory Committee. The LACs would function as a subcommittee of the Library Board and not as an independent committee of the library branch or agency. The role of a LAC was to consult with, and make recommendations to, the Library Board concerning local library needs. One LAC would be designated to represent the needs of each local library or special services section of the Department of Public Libraries.

MISSION

The mission of a Library Advisory Committee is to advise the Montgomery County Library Board and the local Agency Manager on issues of local interest and concern for the benefit of the community and the Department of Public Libraries. These issues may include, but are not limited to, policy matters, collections, services, and facilities. The LACs are the voice of the community operating on a grassroots level for each library branch or services section.

LAC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following represent the roles and responsibilities of each LAC and its membership:

- Advises the Library Board of specific findings, issues, problems and concerns related to the local library and make recommendations to the Board on public library related matters, following the appropriate channels of communication.
- Provides the Agency Manager with user input as needed.
- Facilitates communication between the Library Board, the LAC members, and the local library community.
- Obtains the advice and views of the local community on library needs in their area, and report these views to the Library Board.
- Participates in library advocacy activities including testifying before County Council and/or appearing at Council hearings to support the Department of Public Libraries when needed.
- Recruits new LAC members.

- Represents the users of the local library at community functions such as meetings, fairs, celebrations, etc.

The following actions are prohibited for LACs, due to the structure of the LAC within the Montgomery County Library Board:

- LAC members are not allowed to participate in local library department personnel matters.
- LAC members are not allowed to raise money or establish monetary funds. LACs may, however, work with the Friends of the Library if they desire to assist their branch library in this way.

MEMBERSHIP

Members of a LAC may be recruited from a library community service area by its LAC membership or by the library Agency Manager. The membership of the LAC should reflect the diversity of the local community and broadly represent a cross-section of the community served. Students may also be recruited for membership. However, local library Agency Managers are not considered to be members of their LACs on either a regular or an ex officio basis. Ex officio membership on a LAC is permitted, but ex officio members are not eligible to vote.

There is no limitation on the number of members who can serve on a LAC at any one time. However, an individual may serve as a member of only one LAC at any given time. LACs shall have no less than five (5) members at any time. Each member in good standing is entitled to one (1) vote on the LAC.

Interested individuals can be recruited for membership at any time during the year. Appendix D of this Handbook contains some information on new member recruitment strategies that may be helpful.

Candidates for LAC membership may initiate the membership process by completing an "Application for Nomination to a Montgomery County Library Advisory Committee" and submitting it to the LAC Chair or Agency Manager. A copy of this form is provided in Appendix B of this Handbook. The LAC Chair is responsible for submitting the names of new applicants to the Director's Office of the Department of Public Libraries.

Eligibility

Any individual who lives or works in the area served by a local library is eligible for membership on its LAC. Elected officials are eligible to join a LAC, but organizations, coalitions, or other groups are not eligible for membership on a LAC. Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries employees are not eligible to serve on a LAC, but Montgomery County employees working in other departments of the County are eligible to serve.

There are no other qualifications required for membership on a LAC, only an interest in libraries and a willingness to work on their behalf.

Appointment Terms and Procedures

Members of a LAC are appointed for a term of three (3) years. Members can be appointed for no more than two (2) consecutive three-year terms for a maximum of six years of service. After serving two consecutive three-year terms, any member who wishes to remain active with the LAC on a nonvoting basis may do so and may return to full membership status after a period of one year. Service on a LAC is voluntary and unpaid.

The Montgomery County Library Board is vested with full authority over LAC appointments and reappointments. Each LAC may nominate new members with no limitation on the number of individuals who can be nominated from each LAC. The names of the new member nominees are forwarded to the Library Board for approval. The Library

Board considers approvals of new members as well as continuing members for additional terms twice a year, in October and April.

Terms of appointment begin as soon as the approval process is complete.

The resignation of any member shall be forwarded to the Director's Office in a timely manner. The LAC Chair is also responsible for communicating the names of new members to the Library Board for consideration.

LACs that fall below the minimum number of required members may not vote in an official capacity for the LAC. Members may continue to meet and should report status to the Library Board.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

Officers of a LAC are elected to one (1) year term. Each LAC must elect a Chair and a Secretary. After serving one year, a Chair may be re-elected to a second one-year term. However, a Chair cannot serve any more than two consecutive terms in office. LACs may, at their discretion, elect two Co-Chairs who share the responsibilities of leading the LAC during a term of service. A Secretary may be re-elected for consecutive terms for as long as he or she is a voting member.

The Library Board may approve a limited extension in the term of service of any LAC officer due to extenuating circumstances. Terms of service are automatically extended during the renovation of a local library.

LACs may, at their option, elect additional officers to service. LACs may also establish a subcommittee structure to help in the pursuit of various activities. For example, LACs may wish to establish a committee to recruit new LAC members.

Elections of officers will be conducted no later than June 1 of each year. It is the responsibility of the LAC Chair to call a meeting of the membership prior to June 1 during which the election of officers may be conducted, and to promptly report the results of any elections to the Chair of the Library Board.

The LAC and its members have full charge and responsibility for the operations and administration of the LAC. The assigned Library Board liaison should attend each LAC meetings. The Agency Manager or another department representative should attend each LAC meeting. At no time should an Agency Manager assume leadership of a LAC.

The following identify the responsibilities and duties of each officer:

Duties and Responsibilities of the Chair

- Maintain regular contact and communication with the Library Board liaison and with the Agency Manager to exchange information. Keep the Library Board liaison informed as to the meetings, activities, and concerns of the LAC. Reading the Library Board minutes is recommended.
- Plan, prepare and set the agenda for each LAC meeting, with input from the Agency Manager.
- Preside at LAC meetings.
- Carry out appropriate LAC projects.
- Represent the LAC at special meetings or events called or organized by the Library Board.

- Assist the Board liaison in facilitating the communication between the LAC and Library Board.
- Organize recruitment campaigns for soliciting new LAC members.
- Arrange for programs at LAC meetings to address the interests of library users, with input from the Library Board liaison and the Agency Manager.
- Schedule and hold elections for LAC Officers in a timely manner; submit the names of elected officers to the Director's Office as soon as possible after June 1.
- Testify and/or appear at County Council budget hearings if appropriate and/or other such forums scheduled in local communities with County officials to support the Department of Public Libraries.
- Serve as the official spokesperson for the LAC.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Secretary

- Prepare and distribute the minutes of the LAC meetings. Send a copy of the minutes to the Board liaison and the Director of Public Libraries. Ensure that a copy of the LAC agenda and minutes are posted for public information at the local library. We expect the Agency Manager to post Board minutes (Note: the LAC Chair receives a copy of the Library Board agendas and minutes.)
- Arrange for meeting notices to be posted at the library and communicated to the membership and the Library Board liaison so that they are informed of meetings at least seven days in advance.
- Prepare and distribute LAC correspondence as needed.
- Maintain a LAC archive with minutes, correspondence, and records.
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date membership records for the LAC. Submit names of reappointments, new members, and resignations to the Director's Office by October 1 and April 1 of each year, as appropriate.

Duties and Responsibilities of the Local Book Sale Chair (Optional)

If the LAC chooses to work through the Friends of the Library to hold Local Book Sales in the branch library:

- Coordinate participation at branch book sales as determined by the FOL and the LAC.
- Communicate with the Friends of the Library (FOL) in matters involving financial transactions related to the Local Book Sales.

MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE

A minimum of five (5) meetings of a LAC must be scheduled, and a minimum of three (3) meetings must be held each year (September to August). LAC meetings cannot be held on the same day as the Library Board meeting (usually the second Wednesday of each month). Written notice of each LAC meeting must be given at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting, as provided by Montgomery County regulations. LAC's must notify their Board liaison and the Director's Office if there is a change in meeting dates or times.

LAC members are expected to attend all LAC meetings. The LAC Chair should be notified in advance if any member cannot attend a LAC meeting. Any LAC member who is absent from twenty-five percent (25%) or more of the scheduled meetings of an LAC within a one year period shall be deemed to have resigned, as required by the Montgomery County Code Section 2-75(c). The member's name will be removed from the membership roster.

Any member may resign from a LAC at any time during the year by submitting a letter of resignation to the LAC Chair.

Conduct of Meetings

A quorum for transacting business shall be a simple majority of the LAC membership. Business shall be conducted according to the preferences of the membership in terms of the formality or informality of the meetings. The LAC Chair sets the meeting agenda. Any action or proposal for action should be made in the form of a motion on which the members can vote.

The agenda of each LAC meeting shall include a report from the Library Board liaison.

LACs may wish to consider including special reports and programming as part of their meeting agendas. The Director and Senior Staff of the Department of Public Libraries are available, upon sufficient notice, to give presentations to LACs which desire a briefing on one or more topics of library interest. The Director's Office or the Board liaison can be contacted for more information on this. The Appendix to this Handbook contains several possible presentation or discussion topics that may be of interest.

The Secretary will take minutes of each LAC meeting. A copy of the approved minutes of each meeting must be sent to the Board liaison and Director's Office in a timely manner.

COMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORKING

In the event that an issue, problem, or question emerges in the LAC requiring attention and/or a response from the Library Board, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Board liaison for communication to the Board. If the Board liaison is unavailable, the matter should be brought to the attention of the Library Board Chair by the LAC Chair.

Any letters or written communications sent by the LAC Chair to any citizen, office, or organization dealing with library business should be copied to the Library Board c/o the Department of Public Libraries, 99 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland 20850

Written communications to the Director's Office or to the Library Board should also be sent to the aforementioned address. A list of Library Board officers and members appears in the Appendix.

The Library Board encourages LACs to coordinate and communicate with each other throughout the year. To further that goal, the Board has established six regional groupings of LACs, as listed below. LACs within each of the four regions are particularly encouraged to work together on any initiatives which may be appropriate, such as coordinating budget lobbying activities.

REGION	COUNCILMEMBER 2005-2006	LIBRARIES
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I	Howard A. Dennis	Bethesda Chevy Chase Davis Little Falls Potomac
II	Mike Knapp	Damascus Germantown Olney Poolesville
III	Phil Andrews	Gaithersburg Quince Orchard Rockville Twinbrook
REGION	COUNCILMEMBER 2005-2006	LIBRARIES
IV	Marilyn J. Praisner	Aspen Hill Fairland Wheaton White Oak
V	Tom Perez (HHS)	Kensington Park Long Branch Noyes Silver Spring
At Large	George Leventhal Nancy Floreen Steve Silverman Michael L. Subin	Special Need Childrens Resource Center Multicultural Services

ETHICS

Since LACs are subcommittees of an official Montgomery County Board, all LAC members are subject to the provisions of the Montgomery County Public Ethics Laws.

LIBRARY BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE LACs

The Library Board will review and approve all changes in LAC membership at their October and April meetings, as appropriate.

From among the membership of the Library Board, the Board Chair will designate a liaison for each LAC. It is the responsibility of the Board liaison to attend each LAC meeting, to facilitate the communication between the Board and the LAC, and to be responsive to the LAC. Specifically, the liaison will provide information to, and ask for input from, the LAC regarding Board and Department of Public Libraries activities. The liaison will also serve to communicate any issues, concerns, questions, or related matters originating in the LAC to the Board.

The Library Board through its Chair or the appropriate LAC liaison will furnish the LAC Chair with any relevant documents or guidelines generated by the Board dealing with administrative issues or library advocacy. Such documents include, but are not limited to, those related to budget and lobbying matters.

The Library Board typically holds at least one (1) annual meeting with the LACs, which may include members of the Friends of the Library and Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries Agency Managers.

RELATIONSHIP TO FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY (FOL)

The purpose of the Friends of the Library is to (1) assist the library in its public information effort; (2) to raise funds for special purposes; (3) to encourage gifts, memorials, and endowments for the benefit of library services; (4) to create opportunities for citizens to volunteer; (5) to support public library service in Montgomery County. The activities of the Friends of the Library include raising funds and assisting the Library Board and LACs in the task of promoting public awareness of library needs.

The major difference between a Library Advisory Committee and a Friends of the Library chapter is that the LAC represents the interests of the library user in relation to library policy, and engages in political/community advocacy for libraries, while the Friends of the Library is primarily involved in fund raising for educational programming and other library needs while assisting and working with the Library Board to advocate for better library services. Another major distinction is that the Library Board encouraged the establishment of a Friends of the Library organization in the 1980's as a distinct group separate from but working with the Library Board. Along with Library Advisory Committees, which were established as subcommittees of the Library Board, the Friends of the Library works with the Library Board to promote improved public library service.

The Friends of the Library encourages branch libraries to consider sponsoring the establishment of local Friends chapters. Under its bylaws, the Friends of the Library may grant a Charter to establish and operate a local chapter to further the goals and objectives of the Friends within a defined geographic area. A branch library that does have a local Friends chapter is encouraged to provide ongoing channels of communication with the LAC and Friends chapter by establishing a liaison relationship with the chapter, such as having a LAC member serve on the Board of the local Friends chapter.

Library Advisory Committee members who wish to pursue formation of a local Friends chapter are encouraged to do so. LAC members may join their local library's Friends chapter in addition to maintaining their membership on the LAC. However, each group serves a vital, but different, role in the support of public libraries. The local library's LAC is an important group even though it may operate along with a Friends chapter in serving a specific library.

In local libraries, which have both a LAC and Friends chapter, the LAC will maintain the leadership role and responsibility in any library advocacy activities. The Friends chapter will fulfill an educational and fund raising role and may partner with the LAC in pursuit of library related activities. However, such partnerships should be coordinated by the LAC. The Friends and the LACs are also encouraged to share information regarding activities and initiatives and may participate jointly in activities, as appropriate.

Appendix A - Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries, which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948; Amended February 2, 1961, and January 23, 1980, inclusion of "age" reaffirmed January 23, 1996, by the ALA Council.

Adopted as Montgomery County Department of Public Libraries Policy September 1993.

Appendix B – Application for Nomination

Application for Nomination to a Library Advisory Committee Montgomery County, Maryland

Applicant's Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone Number: (Home) _____

Application Date: _____

Name of Library: _____

(Work): _____

Please tell us about yourself and your interest
in serving on a Library Advisory Committee
(additional pages may be attached)

Return to the Agency Manager at the library of your choice.

Appendix C – MCLB Roster

Get new one

Appendix D – New Recruitment Strategies

NEW MEMBER RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

The following strategies are suggested to facilitate recruitment efforts. Local LACs might consider these and modify them according to their particular community library environment and needs.

1. Develop flyers, which describe the LAC, solicit new members, and provide the name and telephone number of a contact person for further information. Make these flyers available on the public information table of your library or post them on the library bulletin board.
2. With the agreement of the person in charge of the program, make flyers available to attendees at library sponsored public programs or to groups who regularly use the meeting rooms.
3. Consider the volunteers at the local library, those who are regular volunteers and those who help with special projects.
4. Consult with staff supervisors to identify interested, informed patrons who would be an asset to the library through the LAC.
5. School librarians, officers of service groups, and local officials may be able to suggest names of potential members.

Appendix E – Financial Qs & As

FINANCIAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How do local book sale committees deposit funds with FOL?

Funds may be deposited to a local branch of a bank to be decided by the FOL (currently M&T), using a FOL deposit slip. A copy of the deposit slip must be attached to the *Deposit Record* form and sent to the FOL office at the same time.

How do local book sale committees withdraw funds from the FOL, i.e. lead time needed written documentation?

Funds may be withdrawn by using the attached *Request for Funds* form with receipts or invoices attached, if applicable. These requests need to be sent with at least three weeks lead time. Checks will be written within 10 business days of receipt. No funds will be supplied without the proper paperwork. *If not available at the time of the request, invoices and receipts must be forwarded within 30 days.

What is the timing of statements?

The FOL fiscal year is July 1 – June 30. The quarters are July to September, October to December, January to March, April to June. Quarterly reports will be sent at the end of the month following the end of a quarter.

Who can be called with questions/problems?

The office manager of FOL should be contacted at 240-777-0020 with any questions regarding financial information. In the event the office manager is not available or does not satisfactorily answer the question or resolve the problem under the auspices of FOL, the executive director may be contacted to intervene.

Is there an option of banking with the FOL' chapter instead of the system Friends of the Library?

This is certainly to be encouraged with the local FOL Chapter.

Is there an option of banking separate from the FOL?

No. Because the LAC's operate under the Montgomery County regulations as a subcommittee of the Library Board, neither the Library Board nor the LAC's may handle funds.

Revised for the MCPL Policies and Procedures Manual July 2004

Appendix F – Book Sales and Fund Raising

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND, INC.

[GET NEW FORMS ONLINE UNDER FOL](#)

Appendix G – Board ByLaws

THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD BYLAWS

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Montgomery County Library Board was established under the Montgomery County Code to advise the County Executive on a variety of library matters. The advice is most often given to the Director of the Department of Public Libraries for transmission to the County Executive, or directly to the Executive. Refer to County Code Section 2-46 and 2-47 included in Appendix A for more information on Library Board composition, powers and duties.
2. The Board serves as a voice of the community on Library issues and has a leadership role in articulating community opinions and concerns about library-related matters to the Department of Public Libraries (MCDPL). The Board's primary responsibility is to provide MCDPL with the user's perspective on the library system, policies, facilities, and services. The Board may coordinate testimony and advocacy efforts of the local Library Advisory Committees (LACs). The Board may testify before County Council and State legislative bodies with regard to library issues in coordination with the County Executive through the Director of Public Libraries.
3. The Board provides advice and counsel to MCDPL and to the County Executive on a broad range of issues including, but not limited to the following: capital and operating budget matters, facilities, library policy and practices, planning initiatives, and legislative and public affairs.
4. The Board has approval authority regarding all changes in book fines, and other administrative rules, as appropriate. However, the Board does not intervene in personnel or internal operating issues of MCDPL. Refer to County Code Section 2-54 included in Appendix A for a description of additional administrative responsibilities of the Library Board.

II. MEMBERSHIP ISSUES

1. The Library Board consists of twelve members who are appointed by the County Executive and confirmed by the County Council. There is one ex-officio member representing the Public Schools. Refer to County Code Section 2-46, included in Appendix A, for composition and terms of members of the Library Board. Individuals may be invited to participate in Board meetings as liaisons from related organizations.
2. A full term of appointment to the Library Board is three years and each member is eligible for appointment to two full terms of service. Each year, the terms of four members begin. In the event of a resignation before a member's term is completed, a new member will be appointed to fill the unexpired term. Thereafter, the new member is eligible to apply for appointment to serve two full terms (if the unexpired term is less than two years.) Therefore, the maximum amount of service time by any Board member can be no more than approximately eight years. Refer to County Code Section 2-46 and County Council resolution 13-230.
3. Membership on the Board requires certain responsibilities including the following: serving as liaison to two or more LACs, attending and participating in all regular and special Board meetings, serving on one or more standing committees of the Board, attending and participating in the meetings of Board standing or ad hoc committees as appropriate, attending and participating in

special events scheduled by the Board, attending and participating in official functions of MCDPL as requested.

III. OFFICERS

1. The officers of the Board shall be a Chair (President), a Vice-Chairman (Vice-President), and a Liaison Officer.
2. The officers of the Board shall be elected at the regularly scheduled June or July meeting of the Board, and shall take office the following September. They are elected to a term of two consecutive years.
3. The Chair (President) and Vice-Chair (Vice-President) shall not be eligible to succeed themselves in the same offices for a second full two-year term. However, they may be elected for an additional one-year term by a majority vote of the Board membership.
4. The duties of the officers shall be those which are consistent with the functioning of the Library Board as intended in Montgomery County Code.
5. If a Board member fails to meet attendance requirements, the County Executive's office will be notified.

IV. MEETINGS

1. Meetings shall be held monthly at a time and place determined by the Board.
2. Special meetings may be called by the Chair (President) or by three Board members.
3. Each Board member acts as a liaison to two or more local Library Advisory Committees and is expected to attend these meetings as well as the Board meetings.
4. Board members serve on at least one permanent committee and are expected to attend these meetings. Occasionally members are asked to serve on special committees or task forces, as appropriate.
5. Members are deemed to have resigned from the Library Board if absent from 25 percent or more of the scheduled meetings during any six month period, as per Montgomery County Code. Refer to County Code Section 2-148 included in Appendix A for meeting attendance requirements of Board members.

V. QUORUM

1. A quorum for the transaction of Library Board business shall be a simple majority of the membership.

VI. COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

1. Such standing committees as are agreed upon by the Board shall be appointed by the Chair (President). The Committees

presently include but are not limited to: Board and LAC Activities Committee, Legislative and Public Affairs Committee, Library Policy and Practices Committee.

2. Any special committee created by the Board is automatically dissolved upon completion of its assignment.

Diroff/Board/ByLaws Brd.5/99